

By Tom Strode

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The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a bipartisan panel that makes policy recommendations to the State Department and Congress, commended the department and its overseas diplomats for their work but called for action by the Obama administration.

"To date, President Obama has raised religious freedom in his speeches abroad without those sentiments being translated into concrete policy actions, and our hope is that this report will be the administration's call to action," **USCIRF Chairman Leonard Leo said in a written release.**

"This report can serve as a solid baseline for determining effective U.S. policy toward severe religious freedom violators. The report makes clear that the United States must do more to ensure reforms are made and implemented."

USCIRF called on the State Department quickly to designate its "countries of particular concern," a classification reserved for the world's worst violators of religious liberty, and to enact policies to bring change under those regimes.

The State Department will attempt to make those designations by January, Posner said.